

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Woman's Club House

161-3490-046

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET &amp; NUMBER

900 Poyntz Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Manhattan

VICINITY OF

No. 2, Jim Jeffries

STATE

Kansas

CODE

20

COUNTY

Riley

CODE

161

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

## CATEGORY

DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

X PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

X YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

## PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

X OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Woman's Club of Manhattan, Inc.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

900 Poyntz Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Manhattan

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas

66502

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Riley County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Manhattan

STATE

Kansas

66502

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Manhattan Historic Survey

DATE

1980

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY X LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Riley County Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Manhattan

KS.

66502

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

\_\_\_EXCELLENT

☒GOOD

\_\_\_FAIR

\_\_\_DETERIORATED

\_\_\_RUINS

\_\_\_UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒UNALTERED

\_\_\_ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ORIGINAL SITE

\_\_\_MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Woman's Club House in Manhattan is essentially a Bungalow, being a rectangular one-story stuccoed building with a side gable roof and a gabled entrance porch facing south on Poyntz Avenue. The building is sited on a corner lot.

On the north side of the building, there is a kitchen bay. Planters are incorporated into the wall/window treatment of the gable ends. The roof is covered with grey asphalt shingles. The wooden trim is painted white. The windows are paired 8-pane casements. There is a central chimney.

Inside there is an anteroom which opens into the large general meeting room. The meeting room was designed so that it could be subdivided by folding doors. A kitchen and restroom are attached to the north. There is a basement for the furnace and storage.

Over the fireplace there is a plaque, "Woman's Mission," sculpted by George Zolnay. It portrays the mother of mankind educating, guiding, and protecting childhood. This was the official emblem of the American Woman's League and few examples have survived.

### Alterations

Both the exterior and interior of the Woman's Club House have received only minor alterations. The asphalt roof shingles are not original and the brick chimney was probably parged over some time after the construction of the building. The decorative capitals of the porch piers are no longer polychromed.

Inside, the original coved ceiling has been hidden by a dropped acoustical tile grid ceiling. Some folding doors in the general meeting room have been removed.

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1911 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Helfensteller, Hirsch and Watson

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As an Arts and Crafts style bungalow, the Woman's Club House is a design distinctive of the early twentieth century. But more important is the building's association with the American Woman's League scheme which capitalized on the enthusiasm for self and civic improvement during the period. The League's emphasis on supporting education was similar to the goals of the Carnegie Free Libraries. Despite the profiteering that underlay the scheme, Manhattan, and many other American communities, were positively affected by the promotion to develop woman's organizations that played important roles in community life.

## Chronology

The Manhattan chapter of the American Woman's League held its first meeting August 30, 1909 at the Riley County Courthouse. In its constitution the group stated that its purpose was to associate the women of Manhattan in intellectual, cultural and civic activities and to create among its members "an unselfish public spirit that could work for the advancement of the interests of Manhattan and the improvement of the condition of its inhabitants." The most immediate concern of the local group, and in fact the catalyst that led to organization of the chapter, was the donation of a completely furnished chapter house to be constructed on a lot provided by the local group. The club house was to be the gift of the E.G. Lewis Publishing Company.

This donation was the basis of business promotion of the Lewis Company which capitalized on widespread popular interest in organizations for women devoted to charitable causes, intellectual development, social interaction, and civic welfare. The company offered membership in an organization called the American Woman's League, which purported to support a university correspondence education program. Local chapters were required to secure 50 to 75 members; each member was then to solicit subscriptions worth at least \$52.00 for some of the numerous publications listed by the Lewis Publishing Company. The company would receive 50% of the subscription sales as a commission from the magazine publishers involved. Local chapters would then be given a clubhouse provided that it could supply a lot upon which to build it. The building site was to be deeded to the League to be held in trust for the local chapter. Thereafter the chapter was to receive an annual percentage of its subscription sales to be used for their expenses.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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After the Manhattan group was organized in 1909, it was given two years to secure the subscriptions and purchase a building lot. The group purchased a lot in Manhattan in 1910 for \$1500. Construction of the chapter house began early in 1911.

Six standard plans and elevations were used by the American Woman's League for chapter houses. The building in Manhattan is basically a class 3 design (building to cost \$4000 for towns of 3000-5000; chapters of 75 members). The design was provided by the firm of Helfensteller, Hirsch, and Watson of St. Louis, Missouri. From correspondence between the League's head office and Mrs. Lydia Willard, president of the Manhattan chapter, it appears that the standard plan was modified to fit the smaller dimensions available on the lot which was purchased in Manhattan.

While the chapter house was being built in 1911, government prosecution forced the Lewis Publishing Company to suspend its business activities. The company was charged with disobeying the law and flooding the mails with periodicals. When it was suspended, the company owed \$1000 to be paid on the Manhattan contract.

Trustees of the chapter arranged a mortgage for this amount and took in ten members whose dues paid for installation of the furnace and light fixtures. Chapter members also had to pay for the club house furniture. Total cost of the club house came to \$6,651. Closing fees, furnishings, and interest charges added almost \$1000 to the price of the "free" building.

Despite these developments, it was reported that the group enjoyed its first meeting in the new building August 24, 1911. Since the American Woman's League collapsed along with the Lewis Publishing Company, the Manhattan group changed its name in 1913 to the Woman's Welfare Association. In 1920 the name was changed again to the Woman's Club.

At the present time the club has only 48 members, mostly senior citizens. Although the church next door occasionally uses the building, the income and resources of the club are declining even as the costs of utilities, maintenance, and taxes increase.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FUTURE AMENDMENT.

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Bibliography:

"The Woman's Club House of Manhattan, Kansas," The Kansas Clubwoman.  
v. 15, No. 3 (December, 1937), p. 1,9.

Manhattan Mercury. Centennial edition. 2-27-1955.

Manhattan Nationalist. 9-7-1911.

"Terms on Which Chapter Houses Will Be Built," circular, American Woman's  
League. (University City, St. Louis, Missouri: 11-15-1909).

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see attached sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

QUADRANGLE NAME Manhattan

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 709885 4330310  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property occupies the south one-half of Lots 225 and 226 of Ward 4, City of Manhattan.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Julie A. Wortman, Architectural Historian  
Dale Nimz, Historic Preservation Department

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Ks. State Historical Society

10-1-80

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

120 West 10th

913 296-3251

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Topeka,

Kansas 66612

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Joseph W. Snell*

TITLE

Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

DATE

10-14-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

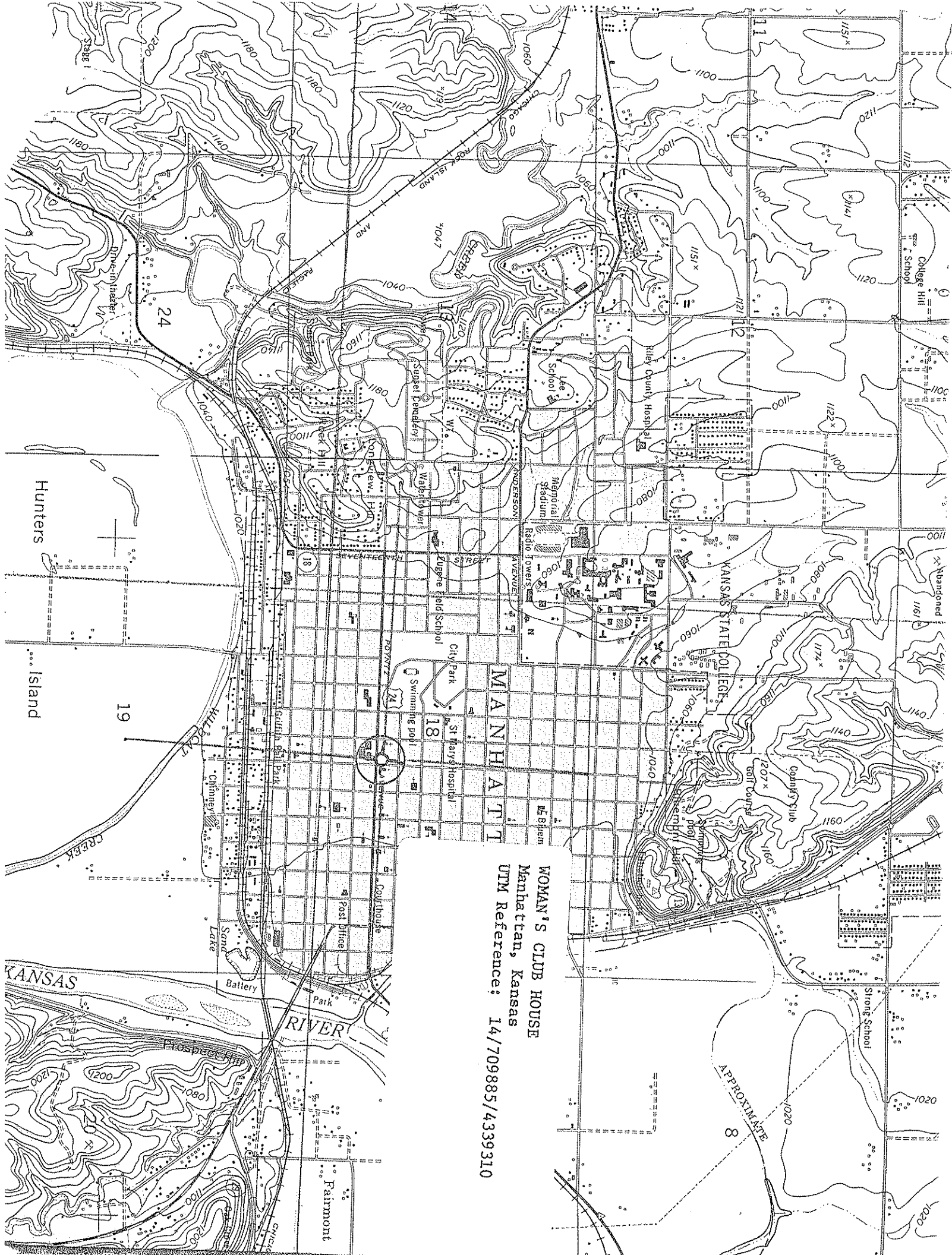
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION





WOMAN'S CLUB HOUSE  
Manhattan, Kansas  
UTM Reference: 14/709885/4339310